



The STEWARD

North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation
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Michael F. Easley
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William G. Ross Jr.
 Secretary, DENR

'NEW PARKS FOR A NEW CENTURY' INITIATIVE SEEKS TO PROTECT CRITICAL LANDS

Twin challenges that face the parks system going into the new century are keeping pace with the state's rapid growth and furthering the system's mission of protecting important lands that represent North Carolina's rich natural diversity.

Those challenges demand a carefully crafted plan, and the response from the NC Division of Parks and Recreation is "New Parks for a New Century," an initiative that includes a list of 47 sites that are potential additions to the system as state parks, state natural areas and a recreation area.

"The parks system includes some of the state's most beautiful scenery and significant natural resources, but it's far from complete," said Carol Tingley, the division's chief of planning and natural resources.

"People in some regions have limited access to state parks and recreation areas," Tingley said. "Also, high-quality examples of the state's great diversity of natural communities are being damaged every day as population growth and development in-



DEEP RIVER AREA

CLAY-BASED CAROLINA BAY



fringe on important natural areas. The state's constitution directs us to protect those natural communities."

The long-range conservation plan that is "New Parks for a New Century" was created against a backdrop of record use of the state parks. Attendance in 2002 topped 13.2 million, an increase of 160 percent in the past 20 years.

So, the plan could not have been completed at a better time, being publicly released in April as part and parcel of One North Carolina Naturally, the broad conservation plan of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The North Carolina Constitution states, "It shall be the proper function of the state to

acquire and preserve park, recreational and scenic areas, and in every other appropriate way, to preserve as part of the common heritage of this State, its open lands and places of beauty."

A task force of division planners, biologists and operations staffers kept that mandate center stage when it began several years ago to consider important natural communities not yet represented within parks or as state natural areas. Specific examples of the state's natural diversity are defined in the division's Systemwide Plan as "resource themes" – such as mountain bog, spruce-fir forest, tidal wetlands, etc.

The Systemwide Plan found that of 108 resource themes

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www.ncsparks.net for Parks Info and Events

UP CLOSE AND 'PERSONNEL'

Chuck Kline, Maintenance Mechanic II, transferred to Crowders Mountain State Park from Mount Jefferson State Natural Area, where he had been working since June. He also was a park attendant at Mount Jefferson and New River State Park during five seasons.

William Lunsford was hired at Falls Lake State Recreation Area as Maintenance

Mechanic I. His experience includes plumbing and carpentry.

Michael Mooney was hired as Groundswoker at Falls Lake State Recreation Area, where he was working as an assistant park ranger. He has a bachelor's degree in creative writing from St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, and was certified in Archaeological Field School at

Durham Technical College. Mooney has conducted archaeological field surveys at Goose Creek and Bath.

David Mumford was hired as Park Ranger II at Falls Lake State Recreation Area, where he was working as assistant park ranger. He has a bachelor's degree in parks, recreation and tourism management from North Carolina State University. He also has worked as park aide at Lake Crabtree County Park in Morrisville.

Mack Talton, previously at Waynesborough State Park, was hired as General Utility Worker at Fort Fisher State Recreation Area. Talton joined the parks system in August, 1998, and he also has experience as a showroom manager and auto parts clerk.

Daniel Tenney was promoted to Park Ranger II at Crowders Mountain State Park. He worked at Carolina Beach State Park for more than two years as Park Ranger I and also has served as assistant park ranger. He has a bachelor's degree in fish and wildlife management from North Carolina State University.

Kelley Thompson was promoted to Park Ranger III at Jones Lake State Park. She had worked as Park Ranger II at Jockey's Ridge State Park since 1994. She has a bachelor's degree in natural resources management/forestry from Western Carolina University. She worked as an outdoor recreation advisor at the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Bryson City and as an environmental educator with the Tennessee Valley Authority in Kentucky.

From The Director's Desk

Dear fellow employees:

When talking about New Parks for a New Century (described in this issue of The Steward), one question is bound to spring to mind: Why choose this time to launch an initiative that could significantly expand the state parks system? It's a fair question in the light of record budget deficits and intense scrutiny of all financial decisions.

The first thought, of course, is of our constitutional mandate to protect the important natural resources of the state and provide for recreation and education. The state constitution doesn't mention anything about suspending our efforts when the economy goes sour.

It also has to do with opportunities. They tend to appear without notice and have a way of appearing more often and more clearly in times of crisis. Two recent examples are our acquisitions of Elk Knob in Watauga County and a significant addition to Raven Rock State Park. Both situations required the division to act relatively quickly. Taking advantage of opportunities is simply easier when good, long-range planning is in place. When you need to act quickly, it's easier to adapt a plan than to create one.

And in our line of work, we often have to step back and take the long view – sometimes the very long view. The state parks system has been around since 1916, and we pretty much have to assume the state parks and natural areas and recreation areas that we create will be there forever. It's in these times of tremendous growth, urban sprawl and, yes, even budget short-falls, that those of us in the "forever" business must recognize our obligation to future generations to plan and prepare to protect North Carolina's magnificent natural heritage.

Sincerely,

Phil

Philip K. McKnelly

TRAINING HONES RANGERS' SKILLS

A typical day as a North Carolina state park ranger rarely ever is.

It can include leading a busload of school kids on a hike or patching up a bleeding hiker. It can include ticketing a speeding driver and monitoring a patch of rare plants. Also not typical is the extensive training rangers need to hone skills so varied.

In many states, park rangers aren't trained in law enforcement or emergency medical services, nor do they train in environmental education, search and rescue, and fire control. In some states – and the National Park Service – rangers may specialize in law enforcement or education.

"The difference is that our staff is required to do it all. The end result is a professional ranger staff that can provide initial response to almost any type of incident," explains Tom Jackson, chief ranger for the NC Division of Parks and Recreation

Within the first two years on the job, a ranger spends about four months at basic law enforcement training and completes another 200 hours of training in emergency medical techniques, search and rescue, interpretation and education, and fire suppression. Rangers also train to be certified environmental educators, leading to yet another 200 hours of workshops, research and hands-on work.

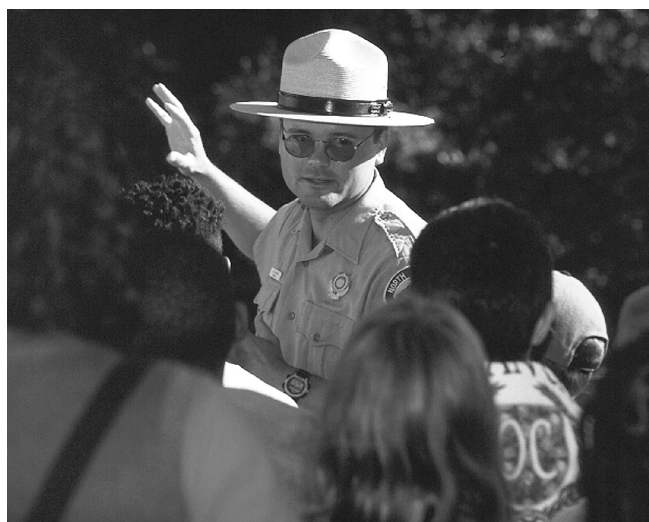
Then, there is refresher training in such areas as CPR, firearms and legal techniques. Some is required to maintain certification, while the division designs some courses.

"Our training requirements are somewhat unique in that our rangers have a wide range of job duties," Jackson said. "I'm constantly amazed with the quality of people we have, and I don't understand how we retain them."

Indeed, one of the major problems the parks system faces is recruiting and retaining ranger applicants with the starting salary at about \$20,000. Similar government agencies outside the state and even within the state offer starting salaries averaging at least \$10,000 more for less demanding training and job responsibilities.

"While most of our people don't expect to be paid comparable to the private sector, we do expect to be paid comparable to comparable positions in state government," said William Totten, superintendent at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area. "I don't really have the words to describe what you feel sometimes. Most people don't know what we do and what it takes to do it."

State park rangers aren't just law enforcement officers who wield guns and nab criminals.



LEADING AN INTERPRETIVE CLASS FOR SCHOOL KIDS IS JUST PART OF A RANGER'S DAY IN THE PARK.

They aren't just natural resource managers who ticket poachers and keep invasive plants at bay. They aren't just paramedics ready to save lives. They aren't just firefighters prepared to smother a wildfire. And, they aren't just educators who can share broad knowledge about the natural world with visitors and educators. Park rangers are all of the above and then some.

Rangers wear these many hats because the park system's 13 million visitors a year bring with them a fair number of emergencies. Rural parks are usually many miles from emergency help. And more urban parks can see response times lag because nearby agencies are so busy.

"All you have to do sometime is go into a campsite and have a family come to you with their kids in tears crowded in the center of their tent and the father afraid to speak because the folks in the neighboring campsite are drunk and have threatened to hurt him," said Totten. "Either people's lives or the protection of the resource depends on you – your decisions and your reactions. If people can't come out to a park and enjoy it, and feel safe being there – if we become a place for folks to hang out to cause problems – really, we might as well" not be here as a state park.

In addition to the ability to protect lives by being a law enforcement presence, rangers can also save lives with medical attention. One of Totten's former rangers, Marcus Smith, received the Governor's Award for Excellence for doing just that.

Two years ago, a park visitor directed Smith to an unconscious man at one of Jordan Lake's campgrounds. When radio communication with para-

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'NEW PARKS FOR A NEW CENTURY'

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identified in the state, only 29 are adequately represented in the parks system now.

Further, the plan identified four geographic regions underserved by the system. Those are the southern Piedmont in an area surrounding Mecklenburg and Union counties, the northern Piedmont in an area surrounding Guilford and Alamance counties, the far western counties and the central coastal plain.

Based on those findings, the task force developed criteria and a scoring system to evaluate potential new units. It was applied to an initial list of more than 70 sites, and 47 of those survived the elimination process.

The sites were first judged using four minimum criteria and those not meeting those basic requirements were removed from consideration. Those were: statewide significance of resource themes represented; sufficient size to protect principal resources and provide appropriate facilities; the absence of incompatible features such as development and pollution sources; and, sufficient access for management and public use.

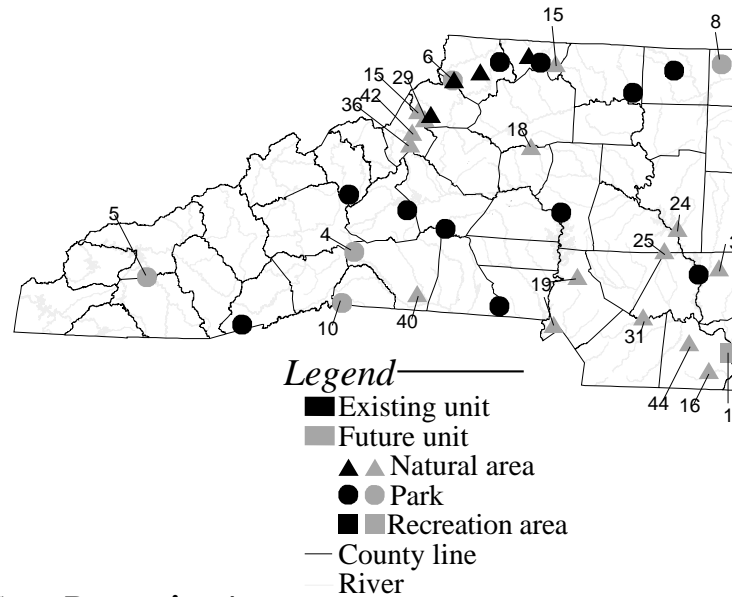
The sites were then evaluated with nine measured criteria such as the presence of rare and/or endangered species and suitability for providing high quality recreation.

"Each of the 47 sites is worthy of preservation, being at least of statewide significance, and each would be an excellent addition to the parks system," Tingley said. "And, other sites may later be discovered and become candidates for the evaluation system."

In almost all cases, specific parcels of land have not been identified for potential acquisition. The intent has been to provide a solid foundation for a plan of action in coming years.

That plan of action will include working closely with local and statewide land trust organizations and setting careful priorities for the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the principal funding source for park land acquisition as well as state parks capital improvements. The trust fund is supported by a portion of the state's deed stamp tax on real estate sales. Other funding sources could include the state's Natural Heritage Trust Fund and Clean Water Management Trust Fund and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

To help the public better understand the New Parks for a New Century initiative, a web page was established at www.ncsparks.net/newparks.html.



State Recreation Area

1. Lower Pee Dee

State Park

2. Carvers Creek Sandhills
3. Deep River Corridor
4. Hickorynut Gorge
5. Little Tennessee River
6. Elk Knob/New River Headwaters
7. Lower Cape Fear
8. Mayo River
9. Middle Neuse River
10. North Pacolet Macrosite

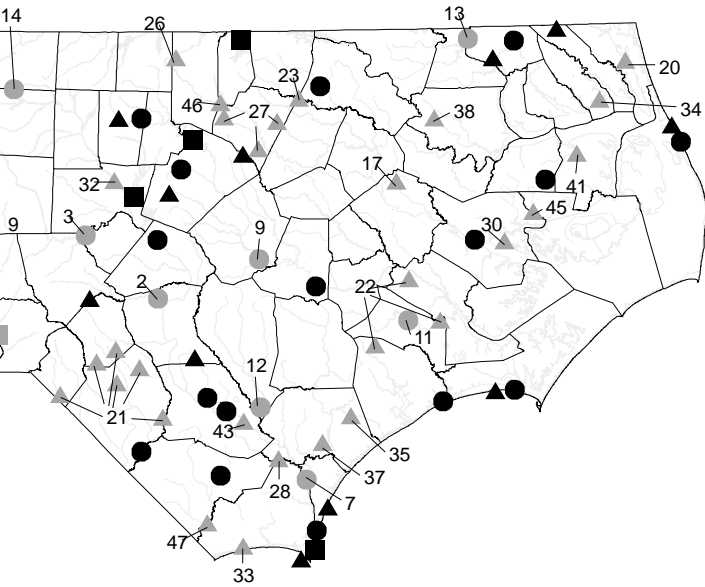
TYPES OF STATE PARK UNITS

State parks are expected to possess significant natural resource values and to provide high quality recreational opportunities. The establishment of any new state park would include the expectation that the park would eventually be open to the public and with some level of facilities provided.

State recreation areas are sites where the primary purpose is outdoor recreation rather than preservation. There is often more intensive development of facilities than in state parks. Protection and enjoyment of the natural resources are still important, and the sites are expected to contain scenic and attractive natural features.

State natural areas are intended to preserve and protect areas of scientific, aesthetic or ecological value. Long-term management objectives for a natural area may include little or no public facilities or access.

The NC Division of Parks and Recreation also manages **state lakes**, **state trails** under the Trails System Act and **state rivers** with the Natural and Scenic River designation.



11. Trent River
12. Upper Black River Bottomlands
13. Upper Chowan River
14. Upper Haw River
- State Natural Area**
15. Mountain Bog Cluster
16. Anson County Flat Rocks
17. Bethel-Grindle Hardwood Flats
18. Brushy Mountains Dome Complex
19. Charlotte Belt Gabbro Cluster
20. Church Island/Maple Swamp
21. Clay-based Bay Cluster
22. Coastal Plain Marl Outcrop Cluster
23. Fishing Creek
24. Flat Swamp Gabbro Forest
25. Gold Hill/Zion Church Flats
26. Goshen Gabbro Forest
27. Granitic Flatrocks-NE Piedmont
28. Greenbank Bluff/Neil's Eddy Landing
29. Hanging Rock Mountain
30. Jackson Swamp Remnants
31. Kinza Slate Bluffs
32. Lower Haw River
33. Mainland Maritime Forest Cluster
34. N. Albemarle Sound Shoreline Cluster
35. Pender County Savannas Cluster
36. Pineola Bog
37. Rocky Point Marl Forest
38. Roquist Pocosin
39. Sand Branch Hillside Seepage Bog
40. Sandy Mush Granite Outcrop
41. Scuppernong River
42. Sugar Mountain Natural Area
43. Tussock Bay Complex
44. Upper Brown Creek Swamp
45. Upper Pungo River Complex
46. Upper Tar River
47. Waccamaw River

medics failed, Smith used his personal cell phone to call for assistance. Smith monitored the camper's vital signs and resuscitated him when he stopped breathing. By the time paramedics arrived, the camper had regained consciousness.

"What Marcus did is representative of the type of work all rangers do across the state," Totten said. "Marcus was the one that was in place at that time who responded the way he should have."

Searching for lost hikers is another area for which rangers need training. Often the first to be asked to help, park staff also manage efforts of outside agencies responding to search-and-rescue calls.

"We do (search and rescue training) to save lives and alleviate suffering," said David Cook, superintendent at Eno River State Park. "When you have trained people, you're more likely to have a successful outcome."

Rangers also care for the resources that make the park. They are trained both to fight wildfires and to conduct prescribed burns that aid the survival of many native plant and animal species.

"Although the DFR (Division of Forest Resources) has the main responsibility for wildfires in our parks, our staff, like first responders, are most often the first to arrive and start fire suppression," said Scott Daughtry, south district superintendent. "We most often put out wildfires before DFR gets on the scene. Even after the arrival of DFR, park staff makes up a large part of any park wildfire suppression crew."

A primary responsibility of the division is to help the public interpret and understand the remarkable natural resources that make up the parks system. Rangers train to conduct interpretive programs, present environmental issues in a well-balanced manner and tailor their remarks to adults or to school kids at several grade levels.

"Teachers can't afford any longer to take someone out for a field day just for fun," said Marti Kane, the division's lead interpretation and education specialist. "So, when rangers take environmental education certification training, they're also learning what classroom teachers need and how to correlate what they do with those needs."

In addition to park rangers, park maintenance mechanics are trained in emergency medical services and firefighting. Maintenance mechanics are often the first park staff to respond to emergencies. And, if a wildfire occurs, they respond along with the rangers.

DOUSHARM, O'NEAL GET NEW POSITIONS

Eric Dousharm has been named a superintendent at Falls Lake State Recreation Area, and Adrian O'Neal has been promoted to superintendent, succeeding Dousharm at Lake Waccamaw State Park.

Dousharm joined the parks service in 1992 as a Ranger II at Falls Lake and was later promoted to Ranger III there. He has associates degrees in outdoor recreation and marine technology from Southeastern Community College and Cape Fear Community College. While in college, he completed a work practicum at Lake Waccamaw and worked as an intern at Mount Mitchell State Park. He spent three years with the National Park Service as a law enforcement ranger on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Dousharm served more than 2 1/2 years at Lake Waccamaw. During his tenure, the park's visitor's center was built.

"Eric's prior experience at Falls Lake and with the Blue Ridge Parkway will serve him well as he returns to work with



DOUSHARM

O'NEAL

Superintendent Bryan Dowdy at the very busy recreation area," said Lewis Ledford, superintendent of state parks. "He's proven himself adept at both the natural resource protection and law enforcement aspects of a superintendent's job."

Dousharm said he is excited about restarting the prescribed burn program at Falls Lake to assist fire-adapted natural communities – native plants and animals that depend on fire for rejuvenation and reproduction.

"There was quite a bit of (prescribed burn) work that had been done (at Falls Lake) throughout the years, and they haven't had the opportunity to continue it," he said. "I'm excited about restarting it because I

learned quite a bit about prescribed fire while I was at Lake Waccamaw."

Dousharm and his wife, Peggy, have two children: Sara, 9, and Joseph, 7.

O'Neal, a native of Dunn, has worked with the parks system for nearly 10 years in addition to working as a seasonal ranger at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area and Mount Mitchell State Park. He graduated from North Carolina State University in 1993 with a bachelor's degree in parks, recreation and tourism management, concentrating in Natural Resource Management.

O'Neal worked as a Ranger I at Cliffs of the Neuse State Park for nearly three years before accepting a Ranger II position at Carolina Beach State Park. While there, he was promoted to Ranger III, was certified in environmental education and advanced law enforcement, and became a general law enforcement instructor and specialized firearms instructor for the division. O'Neal is currently working on a "burn boss" certification to allow him to direct prescribed fire resource management programs.

Ledford said, "Adrian has taken every opportunity to seek specialized training. That drive for self-improvement, coupled with his experience throughout eastern North Carolina, make him an obvious asset to the parks system and to Lake Waccamaw State Park."

"I'm looking forward to getting the community and the park involved together and protecting the resources at Lake Waccamaw," O'Neal said.

O'Neal and his wife, Melissa, also a native of Dunn, have two children: Lauren Ashley, 4, and James Alexander, 2.



SWEARING IN

Two rangers were sworn to duty in April at a ceremony at the Archdale Building in Raleigh. They are Stacy Hines (foreground), a Ranger II at Falls Lake State Recreation Area, and James Ledgerwood, a Ranger II at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT 2003

PARK	% CHANGE					
	MARCH 2003	TOTAL YTD MAR. 2003	MARCH 2002	TOTAL YTD MAR. 2002	(2002/2003) MAR.	YTD
CAROLINA BEACH	17,652	40,022	16,128	36,138	9%	11%
CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE	6,720	14,649	8,136	17,768	-17%	-18%
CROWDER'S MOUNTAIN	18,606	44,718	27,437	64,160	-32%	-30%
ENO RIVER	23,058	47,383	25,429	65,924	-9%	-28%
OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN	511	511	2,814	7,098	-82%	-93%
FALLS LAKE	45,500	67,589	30,728	73,484	48%	-8%
FORT FISHER	51,329	106,350	131,274	186,545	-61%	-43%
FORT MACON	73,144	150,856	92,792	192,586	-21%	-22%
GOOSE CREEK	10,734	26,180	13,995	31,386	-23%	-17%
GORGES	4,241	11,136	7,174	18,229	-41%	-39%
HAMMOCKS BEACH	8,082	24,756	11,706	26,736	-31%	-7%
HANGING ROCK	22,416	40,516	21,564	51,357	4%	-21%
JOCKEY'S RIDGE	52,986	157,669	60,915	102,975	-13%	53%
JONES LAKE	7,412	16,772	5,924	14,008	25%	20%
JORDAN LAKE	14,811	33,845	105,031	160,195	-86%	-79%
KERR LAKE	56,136	132,560	81,208	192,128	-31%	-31%
LAKE JAMES	9,762	23,374	17,189	33,730	-43%	-31%
LAKE NORMAN	29,412	41,338	26,913	58,184	9%	-29%
LAKE WACCAMAW	9,312	18,696	8,572	19,024	9%	-2%
LUMBER RIVER	2,395	7,445	3,025	7,275	-21%	2%
MEDOC MOUNTAIN	3,864	3,864	3,320	8,156	16%	-53%
MERCHANT'S MILLPOND	8,152	13,575	7,972	18,412	2%	-26%
MORROW MOUNTAIN	15,268	38,224	30,760	65,980	-50%	-42%
MOUNT JEFFERSON	5,549	17,512	5,683	13,766	-2%	27%
MOUNT MITCHELL	11,112	16,867	14,698	24,966	-24%	-32%
NEW RIVER	6,200	19,188	6,316	19,880	-2%	-3%
PETTIGREW	6,864	17,229	4,748	11,213	45%	54%
PILOT MOUNTAIN	28,147	54,793	26,578	65,583	6%	-16%
RAVEN ROCK	11,968	21,363	11,219	23,906	7%	-11%
SINGLETARY LAKE	1,257	2,435	748	2,020	68%	21%
SOUTH MOUNTAINS	13,386	26,366	12,010	28,558	11%	-8%
STONE MOUNTAIN	24,992	45,848	30,632	80,312	-18%	-43%
WEYMOUTH WOODS	2,667	7,058	2,694	6,622	-1%	7%
WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD	22,855	47,118	32,274	88,815	-29%	-47%
SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL	626,500	1,337,805	887,606	1,817,119	-29%	-26%

Mission

The mission of the North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation is:

to protect North Carolina's natural diversity;

to provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities throughout North Carolina;

and

to exemplify and encourage good stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources

for all citizens and visitors of North Carolina.

WWW.NCSPARKS.NET FOR PARKS INFO AND EVENTS

SAFETY ZONE

Safety Matters When It Comes to Ladders

- β Do not underestimate the danger of falling. Falls are a leading cause of accidental injury both on and off the job.
- β To reach high objects, use a ladder or step stool – never a box or chair.
- β Follow the 4-to-1 rule when using a straight ladder: place its base out at least 1/4 of its height.
- β Always face the ladder when climbing and descending.



The Steward

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